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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the ancient people of Kemet (Egypt), "the black land," built and operated the first major libraries and institutions of higher education in the world. Topics of discussion include the Ancient Egyptians as an African people; a chronology of Ancient Kemet; literature in Kemet; a history of Egyptian Librarianship; the temple-library-university; the Kemetic library as the prototype for all libraries; the first librarians and library directors; library architecture; Kemetic education; the roots of the Dewey Decimal system in Kemetic classification; the classification system of Kemet; information retrieval and a library catalogs in Kemet; roots of the bookcase/chest in Kemet; and miseducation and misinformation on library history. (Contains 70 references.) (AEF)

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The Ancient Kemetic Roots of Library and Information Science

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Abstract: Contrary to traditional library history taught in American schools of library and information science, the library, as an institution, and librarianship, as a profession, have their roots in ancient African society. Thus Africa, in addition to being the birthplace of the modern human species, is also the birthplace of librarianship. Thousands of years before the emergence of Greece as the fountainhead of Western civilization, Africans in ancient Kemet (Egypt) had developed an advanced system for collecting, organizing, describing, preserving, and providing access to information, and had developed a class of professionals to operate the system. Until this truth is known, and incorporated into our social consciousness and the library school curriculum, we will continue to masquerade as the informed, when, in reality, we are the misinformed and miseducated "educated". An Afro-centric corrective paradigm juxtaposes and probes the above phenomena. NOTE: The author used photographs and illustrations to further support his arguments.

Introduction

The knowledge of knowledge, and its acquisition, should not be a mystery to the African, because historical evidence indicates that it was his/her ancestors, the ancient people of Kemet (KMT), "the black land", who built and operated the first major libraries and institutions of higher education in the world. Thus, the African should take his/her proper first place in library history, a well deserved first place, based upon historical evidence.[1] That evidence directs us to begin our discussion of library and information science with ancient Kemet (KMT), "the black land", Egypt, the home of all humankind, a high culture, and the African world community, and consequently, an essential starting point in any discussion of civilization and history that will allow us to define and develop new realities and visions for human development.[2]

The great Cheikh Anta Diop (1923-1986), author, Egyptologist, Kemetologist, historian, linguist, and scientist, stressed the importance of the above when he wrote:

For us, the return to Egypt in all domains is the necessary condition for reconciling African civilizations with history, in order to be able to construct a body of modern human sciences, in order to renovate African culture. Far from being a reveling in the past, a look toward Egypt of antiquity is the best way to conceive and build our cultural future. In reconceived and renewed African culture, Egypt will play the same role that Greco-Latin antiquity plays in Western culture (Diop, 1991, 3).

Hence Kemet is to Africa what Greece is to Europe, a foundation/introduction to civilization, and in the case of Africa, the oldest civilization, developed in part 6,000 years ago by people of African descent in the rich Nile valley.

The Ancient Egyptians: An African People

Now the Black civilization that shook the white man up the most was the Egyptian civilization, ...a Black civilization. (He) was able to take the Egyptian civilization, write books about it, put pictures in those books, make movies for television and the theater --- so skillfully that he has even convinced other white people that the ancient Egyptians were white people... They were African, they were as much African as you and I (Malcolm X, January 24, 1965).

There is an ongoing debate concerning the race of the ancient Egyptians. Some have said the Egyptians were not Black, and thus African people have no claim to Egyptian culture, and that the Black folks pictured in the temples and on the monuments of Egypt were only slaves in a racially mixed Egyptian population, and thus did not play a significant role in Egyptian civilization. [3]

To debate the issue here isn't necessary. However, we can briefly explore this important topic and remind ourselves and others that "...human lineage began in Africa some 2.5 million years ago...", and as a result, all humans are genetically linked to an African woman who lived 200,000 years ago (Williams, 1991, 56-57).[4-5]

Cheikh Anta Diop, author of "Origin of the Ancient Egyptians" in *Egypt Revisited* (Van Sertima, 1982, 9-37), understood the significance of the above facts. His research uncovered seven key aspects of this race/culture debate.

(1) He asked the curator of the Cairo Museum to allow him to perform a melanin (skin color) test to determine the pigmentation of the ancient Kemetics and thus end the debate. The curator refused to allow him to perform the test. The test would, according to Diop, "...enable us to classify the ancient Egyptians unquestionably among the Black races." (*Ibid*, 15)

(2) He reported that, by osteological measurements (body size as determined by muscles and bones) used in physical anthropology, the ancient Egyptians were an African people (*Ibid*).

(3) He discussed the connection of the Group B blood type among the modern and ancient Egyptian populations, and the African population of west Africa (*Ibid*, 16).

(4) He discussed how Herodotus (the "father of history") and others (Aristotle, Strabo, Diodors...) referred to the Egyptians and the Ethiopians as people with "...black skins and kinky hair," or people who were (according to Ammianus Marcellinus, Book XXI, para 16:23) "...mostly brown or black."

(5) He illustrated how the divine inscriptions of Kemet associated the surnames of the gods with the word black; hence, a reflection of the (black) good in people and God.

(6) He illustrated how in *The Bible* (where Egypt is mentioned over 750 times) Semitic (Hebrew and Arabic) custom and tradition associate Egypt with Black people.

(7) He investigated the linguistic link (e.g. Egyptian and Wolof) between ancient Kemet and other parts of Africa.

The crux of the issue of race and the Egyptians is part of an attempt to take Egypt and Egyptian history out of Africa intellectually, and thus substitute a Euro-centric politicization of history that confirms the racist notion that Africa has no history of importance, and that the ancient civilization of Egypt is not part of the African experience, but rather is a part of the Arab, Asian, or Eurocentric experience.

For example, Elmer Johnson, in his book *A History of Libraries in the Western World*, made the above mistake by referring to Egypt as part of the Western world rather than Africa,

when he hesitatingly said, "It is difficult to say whether the first library in the Western World was located in Egypt." (Johnson, 1965, 21)

Hence it seems easy for those of the Euro-centric mind to put Egypt in the Middle East, or anywhere but Africa, because its great past contradicts all the jungle and savage images white racism has created about Africa and its people.

The truth, as revealed through a correct reading and interpretation of history, is that Egypt is a part of Africa and African people. No amount of dis-information or mis-information will change that reality; a reality some may not want to face, because it requires that they alter/change what they think about Africa, about the African experience, and ultimately about themselves.

This ambivalence or fear to alter how we think, act, and react to African ethology was illustrated by Allman F. Williams when he said, "...if the 'Out of Africa' model proves even partially correct, ...it will fundamentally change our view of who we are," in reference to the African origins of humankind (**U.S. News & World Report**, 1991, 60).

Consequently, there seems to be a fear that once people (especially those effected by white racism) realize that their roots are tied to an African woman who lived 200,000 years ago, and that Egypt was a Black civilization, they may have psychological problems.

The problem is rooted in white racism, and a false consciousness that will not allow one to see Egypt (Kemet) as a Black civilization; the ancient leader in art, literature, science, government, etc., while Europe, the pinnacle of Western thought, eagerly sent its elite (students) to Kemet to receive the advanced and fundamental lessons of civilization, an enterprise Kemet mastered many years before the rise of Europe.

We should expect this debate/problem concerning the race of the Egyptians to continue. However, we know, through the work of Diop and other capable scholars, that there is a solid connection of language, culture, religion, biology, and eyewitness reports, to prove that the ancient Egyptians were an African people.[6] They were a people who saw themselves as Black, referred to themselves and their land (Kemet: "the black land") as Black, and had others see and refer to them and their land as Black.

Having explored the issue of phenotype (color/race) and its delineations in ancient Kemet, we can now turn briefly to its history.

Ancient Kemet: Remember the Time

To assist our chronological understanding, Manetho, a Kemetic priest, in his book *Lost History of Egypt*, divided Kemetic rulers into thirty time periods or dynasties. This division, still used by modern historians, sub-divides Kemetic dynasties into: the Old Kingdom (First Intermediate, Middle Kingdom, Second Intermediate), and the New Kingdom, geographically referred to as Upper and Lower Egypt to identify their north and south locations.

The Upper and Lower kingdoms of Kemet were rivals until the reign of King Menes (fl. c. 3100 B.C. - 3038 B.C.), also known as Aha Mena and Narmer. He politically united Kemet, established a centralized government (c. 3200 B.C.), and founded a capital named Memphis in his honor, between Upper and Lower Kemet (Egypt).

This political unification played a significant role in Kemet, which allowed economic, social, cultural, and governmental institutions to endure with comparatively little change for almost two thousand years. Thus a high culture emerged, hieroglyphic (Mdw Ntru) writing was introduced, commerce flourished,

the great pyramids were built, and Kemet became one of the most advanced nations in the ancient world. Consequently, it set a record of achievement few civilizations could rival.

After this period, Kemet entered a cycle of instability which ended in c. 2000 B.C. with the establishment of the Middle Kingdom (2134-1786 B.C.), and the founding of Wa-Set (a.k.a. Wo-Se' and Thebes). However, because of weak leadership, in 1786 B.C. Kemet was captured by foreign nomads, the Hyksos, who were eventually expelled in c. 1570 B.C. leading to the birth of the New Kingdom.

The New Kingdom (c. 1570-1085 B.C.) witnessed: the rule of Amenhotep I, II, IV (Amenhotep IV introduced monotheism to Kemet and the world), Tuthmosis I, II, III, and IV, Makare Hatshepsut (the queen who proclaimed herself pharaoh and ruled during the minority of her nephew Tuthmosis III), and Rameses I and II (the Great), whose temple doorways were flanked by large pylons or towers (often with statues or obelisks in front), the construction of the famous rock carved temple of Abu Simbel, and the establishment of Wa-Set/Wo-Se' (Thebes) and Memphis as the intellectual, political, commercial, and cultural center of the world.

After the twentieth dynasty (1200-1085 B.C.), Kemet was subject to foreign domination by Libya, Sudan, Assyria, Nubia, and Persia, with only a brief period of independence in 405 B.C., which ended in 332 B.C. when Alexander, the "Great" (a former student of Aristotle), and his army invaded.

Thereafter, the Greeks founded the Ptolemaic dynasty (Greeks in Egypt) and built the city of Alexandria to honor Alexander "the Great" and Hellenistic culture, with the Alexandria Library as its hallmark. This library was built "unscrupulously" upon ancient Kemetic knowledge and the "confiscated" documents of Athens (Hessel, 1950, 1).

The Ptolemaic empire lasted for 200 years, until it was weakened by internal conflict and fell to Rome in 30 B.C. Egypt was absorbed into the Byzantine empire (c. A.D. 395) until the Arab conquest of 639-42 A.D., which incorporated (Kemet) Egypt into the Arab/Muslim "Middle East" world community, a place where it has remained ironically, despite its African roots and colonization by the Mamelukes (1250), Ottoman Turks (1517), French (1798), and the British (1883-1937), since 639-42 A.D. (Levey, 1983, 254-55).

Now that it has been established that the ancient Egyptians were an African people with a long history, we can turn to our main topic, the Kemetic roots of library and information science via an evidential exploration of: literature, history, education, classification, cataloging, and the genesis of information storage.

A Library: A Literature

An obvious axiom in any discussion of libraries is that one must first have a literature in order to have a library. In this regard, Kemet was rich: (1) the Egyptian language is the oldest written (via hieroglyphics) language in existence (McWhirter, 1982, 166); (2) evidence of a literature is present in the library of Akhenaton (Amenhotep/Amenophis, IV) which contains numerous clay tablets/books in cuneiform writing representing diplomatic correspondence between Amenhotep III, Akhenaton's father, and nation-states subject to Egypt (Metzger, 1980, 211); (3) the Palermo Stone, a book of annals of Kemet mentioning Seshait (Seshat/Sesheta) as the goddess of libraries, writing, and letters (Richardson, 1914, 58-60); and (4) the text of the Precepts of Ptah-hotep, one of the first (c. 4000 B.C.) philosophical compositions (composed 2,000 years before

the Ten Commandments of Moses and 2,500 years before the Proverbs of Solomon), engraved in stone (Nichols, 1964, 33-34).

Hence literature in ancient Kemet was common and varied in its form. Sometimes it was on papyrus and at other times it was carved/engraved in stone (c. 2700 B.C.) on the walls of temples (library-universities), pyramids, and other monuments (Nichols, 1964, 32). Fortunately, works written in stone have survived, to provide unequivocal evidence of an extensive Kemetic tradition.[7]

This survival gives credence to the expressions "written in stone" and "the handwriting is on the wall"; the former meaning that a situation will not or may not change, and the later meaning a person must be aware that something negative may happen to him/her, or that a negative or positive is obvious, and a person must proceed with caution. The origins of these expressions are not known. However, we can turn to the wise directives of the twenty-sixth confession of the Kemetic forty-two Negative Confessions that require the deceased to recite when in the Hall of Judgement. It states: "Hail Seshet-kheru, who comest forth Urit, I have not made myself deaf unto the words of right and truth," (Budge, 1959, 159), and a verse in the Book of Daniel (Chapter five, Verse five) in *The Bible* which states: "Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace." (Barker, 1985, 1307)

Moreover, wisdom was the essence of Kemetic literature, as it placed people at the center of life, in harmony with God, and the ancient Kemetic concern for a transformation (life, death, rebirth) of the soul, found in:

(1) the famous Book of the Coming Forth by Day (commonly called the Book of the Dead), a book of magical formulae and instructions intended to direct the soul of the departed (James, 1954, 134);

(2) the Book of What Is in the Duat, a composition on magic and chemistry;

(3) the Book of Gates, a work on the spiritual world;

(4) the Book of Caverns, a book concerning psychology;

(5) the Litany of Re, a metaphysical description/praise of the sun;

(6) the Book of Aker, a spiritual exaltation of the king;

(7) the Book of Day and the Book of Night, a work focused on cosmology and astronomy; and,

(8) the Book of the Divine Cow, a mythological litany which allowed the ancient Kemetics (Egyptians) to organize their temple-library-university and subsequently develop the early antecedents of librarianship.

Egyptian Librarianship: A History

Egypt was the land of temples and libraries.... (James, 1954, 46). *Contrary to a misconception which still prevails, the Africans were familiar with literature and art for many years before their contact with the Western world* (Jackson, 1970, 20).

Egyptian librarianship has a 6,000 year continuous history. During the early periods of human civilization, the ancient Egyptian temples contained the first organized library collections. The collections were both private and public collections, housed in temples, schools, royal palaces, and other important places (Amen, 1975, 574). The libraries were maintained by librarian-priests who attended a professional library and religious school. Evidence of this has been found at Wa-Set/Wo-Se' (Thebes) in the tombs of

librarian priests, Neb-Nufre and Nufre-Heteb, a father and son team. The first indication of librarianship was as an inheritance-based profession (*Ibid*).

The chief library builder of ancient Kemet, and thus the most famous, was the previously mentioned Rameses II (c. 1304-1237 B.C.), who can be called the dean of the library sciences. He built the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, the Abu Simbel rock temple-library (regraded as one of the wonders of the world), the Abydos temple library, a temple-library at Luxor, and notwithstanding, he established the sacred Ramesseum funerary temple-library at Wa-Set/Wo-Se' (Thebes) (c. 1250 B.C.), and inscribed the first library motto, "Medicine for the Soul" over its entrance.

Since its non-indigenous discovery, this motto has become the subject of a variety of translations, interpretations, and renditions, e.g.: (1) the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus of Sicily refers to it as "Medicine for the Soul,"; (2) Edward Edwards (1865, 1969) said Diodorus translated the motto as "The Soul's Dispensary,"; (3) Putman (1967) reports it as "A Place of Healing for the Soul,"; (4) Myers (1964) refers to it as "The Dispensary (or Hospital) of the Soul," or "The Soul's Dispensary,"; while (5) Nichols (1964) used the eyewitness report of Hecataeus of Miletus (a Greek geographer and historian) to confirm the motto as "Healing of the Soul".

This assortment of viewpoints attests to a general agreement that Kemet was the home of the first library motto, and an early leader in linking knowledge, and its acquisition, to the health of the individual and society, which facilitated an interdisciplinary organization of an estimated 20,000 now extinct rolls/books at Wa-Set/Wo-Se' on agriculture, astronomy, history, irrigation, literature, and other topics by Rameses II c. 325 A.D. These texts were divided into two levels (high and low) and six divisions consisting of: grammar, mathematics, astronomy, law, medicine, and priestly love (Nichols, 1964, 23, 28).

The libraries of ancient Kemet were referred to by a number of names, e.g.: (1) "...the library building at Edfu (was) known as the House of Papyrus (Thompson, 1940, 3); (2) the House of the Tablet; (3) the House of Sealed Writings, and other names. However, they all usually held "...the sacerdotal books employed in the temple services," (Nichols, 1964, 18), government archives, wall engravings/inscriptions, tombs, papyrus rolls/sheets (the temple university-library was a papyrus manufacturing center). In a sense, the pyramids themselves were libraries, because papyrus sheets/rolls were found in almost all of their tombs.

In addition to the above, the temple libraries of Kemet were elaborately decorated. The inner halls had "...representations of Thoth (Djehuti/ Tehuti), the Kemetic god of the arts, speech, hieroglyphics, science, and wisdom; and Safkhet-Aabut (a.k.a. Sesheta, Seshat, Seshait), the goddess of literature and the library," who was called "The Lady of the House of Books," the "Lady of Letters," the "Presidentess of the Hall of Books," "The Great One," and "The Lady of Libraries" (Edwards, 1969, 5; Mercatante, 1978, 140); an exquisite tribute to the feminine essence of library science and ecclesiastical interior design.

Temple Universities

Every sanctuary possessed its library and school, "the House of the Tablet" or "the House of the Seal," in which the temple archives and liturgical texts were preserved.... (Thompson, 1940, 1).

The libraries of Kemet were not only places of archives, sacred words, papyrus manufacturing, and the like, they were also centers of learning, that combined the functions of their

libraries and temples into universities.[8] Hence Kemet became a land of temples, libraries, and universities. As a result, the "temple-library-university" became the key center of ancient Kemetic intellectual and spiritual activity.

Evidence of this library-temple university relationship has been explored in recent literature on Kemet by Asa Hilliard, who reports that at Wa-Set/Wo-Se' (Thebes/Luxor) "...two gigantic temples (Southern Ipet; Ipet Isut, the largest temple of ancient times) ...contained the most highly developed education systems on record from ancient times." (Hilliard, 1985, 156) Ivan Van Sertima tells us that the ancient Kemetic temple university system had a "...huge library divided into five major departments: astronomy and astrology; geography; geology; philosophy and theology; law and communication...", with an elite faculty of priest-professors called "teachers of Mysteries" who, "...at one time, catered to an estimated 80,000 (Ipet Isut University) students at all grade levels." (Van Sertima, 1985, 19)

Moreover, the temple-university library arrangement of ancient Kemet was common. "Every important temple in ancient Egypt was equipped with (an) ...extensive library of books," (Hurry, 1978, 112), and "...every temple had its library and school." (Schullian, 1990, 310)

The First Library

Since the Kemetic library was the "...home of the ancient writing material, papyrus," science and letters, and an extensive literature, with an "...excellent system of archives and public records with a sizeable staff," one can reasonably conclude that it was also the home of the first library, and thus the prototype for all libraries (Hessel, 1955, 1).

Acknowledgment of this primacy has been scarce within the literature. However, a few brave scholars have affirmatively stated:

(1) *We must look to the temples of ancient Egypt for the first libraries* (Thompson, 1940, 1);

(2) *The establishment of the first library of consequence has been attributed to Rameses II of Egypt (r. 1304-1237)* (Dunlap, 1991, 558);

(3) *One of the earliest societies to develop collections which may be called, in our sense, libraries was Egypt* (Metzger, 1980, 210); and,

(4) *When Abraham visited Kemet c. 1950-1900 B.C., libraries housing public records, religious texts, medical texts, and annuals had been flourishing for over a thousand years* (Richardson, 1914, 57-58).

The above declarations concerning Kemet as the home of the first library may spark some to ask about the contributions other civilizations have made to library and information science. To this end, we acknowledge the library of King Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, which contained more than 30,000 tablets (c. 625 BC), and the contribution of Sumeria, Babylonia, Assyria, China, and other early civilizations to library history.

We recognize that it would be dishonest of us to enthusiastically report the glory of libraries in ancient Kemet, and at the same time discount/ignore the library history of Sumeria, Babylonia, Assyria, and other civilizations; especially when we know that the civilizations of Kemet, Sumeria, Babylonia, and Assyria flourished simultaneously (Mukherjee, 1966, 76). However, "...there are records of even earlier libraries (found in Egypt) at Heliopolis, Menes (Memphis), and (Wa-Set/Wo-Se') Thebes, that were literary centers from three to six thousand years ago, and (that) many

ancient Egyptian inscriptions refer to (them in) their libraries," (Myers, 1964, 199), before the advent of the simultaneous phenomenon. Thus Kemet is identified as the home of the first library.

First Librarians/Library Directors

Since Kemet is the home of the first library of consequence, we can logically conclude that it is also the home of the first (priest teacher) librarian. Librarianship was a respected profession in antiquity that commanded the titles of: (1) "custodians of the unlimited knowledge," (James, 1954, 150) (2) scribe of the house of sacred writings (Shedmeszer and Messuri), (3) scribe of the house of the archives of Pharaoh (Neferhor), (4) scribe of the gods, (5) scribe of the sacred book, (6) scribes of the hieroglyphics, (7) scribe of records, (8) keeper of the scrolls, (9) the controller of the library, and other verve (special ability/talent) titles.

Ernest Richardson, in his book *Some Old Egyptian Librarians*, has identified twenty-one "librarians" by name, e.g.: the son of Nennofre (in the House of Books and Case of Books), the grandson of King Khufu (a writer in the House of Books), Senmut, Mai, Peremhab (scribes of the archives), Messuri, Shedmeszer, Neferhor, Henhathor (scribe of the Kings' records) son of Nekonetkh, and two anonymously, to demonstrate the importance of, and respect for, librarianship in ancient Kemet.

This respect allowed Rekhmire, a vizier, judge, superintendent of the prophets and priests, chief of six courts of justice, and master of secret things, to also be a librarian in the Temple of Amon. He headed what may have been the first law library of 40 law books, at the time the largest collection of law books in the ancient world. His picture is depicted in the tomb of the Temple of Amon with forty rolls at his feet and a collection of books from 15th century B.C. (a picture of him is also on the ceiling of the Library of Congress).[1] In addition to the titles, names, and authority, the librarians of ancient Kemet (as mentioned above) also had their own god and goddess, Djehuti/Tehuti (Thoth) and Seshait, to protect the profession.

Library Architecture

The architecture of ancient Kemet was independently formulated before 3000 B.C. from the abundant clay and wood of the region via ceramic art and brickwork, which later emerged into a great library building tradition.

This tradition can be traced to the outstanding work of our dean of library architecture, Rameses II (c. 1292-1225 B.C.), who built a public library 'at Wa-Set/Wo-Se' (Thebes) under the direction of Amen-em-an, referred to by Charles L. Nichols as an "...the vestiges of the ancient building, which may be called the oldest library standing." (Nichols, 1964, 10) This magnificent building has withstood the test of time to confirm its place in library history, along with other structures:

(1) the Abu Simbel, one of the world's largest temples, was "...brilliantly designed (by Rameses II) so that the rays of the sun could penetrate the deepest room, 180 feet back from the entrance (Kondo, 1988, 3).

(2) the labyrinth style administrative center was built with some reported 4,000 rooms, making it one of the largest architectural structures in the ancient world (Kondo, 1988, 3), and notwithstanding,

(3) the buildings with flat stone block roofs supported by closely spaced internal "...immensely thick..." columns, and walls with an exterior covered with "...hieroglyphics and pictorial carvings in brilliant colors with

symbolic motifs...", indicating a mastery of the arts and sciences (Levey, 1983, 255).

Hence, no discussion or trivialization of libraries in Kemet can be made based on the idea that no building existed to house a library. The buildings were massive, and organized to house books and other related materials. In fact, "...every important temple in ancient Egypt was equipped with (an) extensive library of books," (Hurry, 1978, 112), and a school to study Kemetic science and theology.

Kemetic Education: The Mystery System

And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. (Acts, 7:22)

When it came to the acquisition of knowledge, Kemet was the center of most, if not all, ancient learning. At the center of this learning was the Mystery School, a secret learning center (until c. 570 B.C.) where one went to become a whole person, and thus help mold civilization and its philosophy. Its curriculum was a rigid and lengthy process designed to ensure (1) an educated leadership, and (2) peace among the populous via effective leadership.

As a result, students from around the world came to study the secrets/mysteries of Kemet, the learning. center of medicine, science, astronomy, mathematics, and other subjects taught by African master teachers. Moses and other ancient prophets studied at Kemet (the home of monotheism, salvation, etc.) before introducing the world to religion and religious study. The above quote from the book of Acts (7:22) confirms this reality.

However, the most populous international students were the Greeks, referred to by the priests of Sais as "...the children of the Mysteries," (James, 1954, 39-40, 42) consisting of: Solon of Conchis, Thales, Plato, Eudoxus, and Pythagoras, who, according to Plutarch, "...greatly admired the Egyptian priests," and copied their "...symbolism and occult teachings..." to "...incorporate..." them in their "...doctrines." (Babbitt, 1969, 161)

The temple-university (the home of the Mystery System) was conducted by an elite faculty (as mentioned previously) called Hersetha or teachers of Mysteries, who taught: architecture, carpentry, cosmography, plant science, pharmacology, physiology, anatomy, embalming, law, astrology, literature, magic, theology, mining, metallurgy, land surveying, engineering, geography, forestry, agriculture, and animal science (in addition to the above) in the departments of: (1) the Mystery Teachers of Heaven (astronomy, astrology...); (2) the Mystery Teachers of All Lands (geography...); (3) the Mystery Teachers of the Depths (geology, cosmography); (4) the Mystery Teachers of the Secret World (philosophy, theology); and (5) the School (mystery) of Pharaoh and Mystery Teachers (language, law, communication) (Myer, 1900 via Hilliard, 1984, 157).

Furthermore, Kemetic education required students to master:

A. the seven liberal arts of: grammar, rhetoric, logic, geometry, arithmetic, harmony/music, and astronomy;

B. the ten virtues of: (1) the control of thought; (2) the control of action; (3) steadfastness of purpose; (4) identity with spiritual life to higher ideals; (5) evidence of a mission in life; (6) evidence of a spiritual call to Orders or the Priesthood in the Mysteries; (7) freedom of resentment when under persecution or wrong; (8) confidence in the power of the master teacher; (9) confidence in one's ability to learn; and (10) readiness or preparedness for initiation (James, 1954, 30-31), and

C. the union/principle of opposites, such as:

negative-positive, male-female, material-immaterial, body-soul, love-hate, hot-cold, wet-dry, fire-water, war-peace;

and a general Kemetic education requiring a dedication of one's time to:

(1) become a scribe (a highly honored profession which required disciplined study directed by a master teacher),

(2) change (transform) because of new knowledge,

(3) conduct independent study to improve one's self,

(4) study nature (natural phenomena),

(5) believe in one supreme creator (God),

(6) unify one's consciousness with the universe, and

(7) become like the supreme creator (God);

with the overall aim being to exemplify the NTRU (diving) principles of Tehuti (a deity of writing and learning...) and Maat (a deity of truth, justice, harmony, equilibrium, cosmic law, and righteousness), and be a holistic (mind, body and soul) blend of theory and practice.

A synthesis of these educational concepts later became the "...prototype for Greek (grammar, rhetoric, logic) and Roman (arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music) education systems"; systems that generously borrowed from the Kemetic seven liberal arts (grammar, rhetoric, logic, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, music/harmony) to structure the curriculum of Western higher education (Hilliard, 1984, 160).

Kemetic Classification before Melvil Dewey

Speaking of borrowing, we can investigate the classification scheme introduced by Melvil Dewey (1851-1931) in 1872, after studying schemes for classifying knowledge devised by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), who emphasized the study of nature and the usefulness of analyzing all phenomena in terms of "the four causes (material, formal, efficient, final)." These echo the Kemetic "four elements" of earth, air, fire, and water used in the Mystery Schools before the birth of Aristotle and other early Greek "philosophers".[9]

The association between Aristotle's four causes and the Kemetic four elements may explain why Dewey anonymously published his philosophically based classification scheme in 1876. He may have recognized that Aristotle obtained many of his philosophical ideas from ancient Kemet. To cite Aristotle as a source might have discounted the originality of his classification, and prompted questions about his credentials before the scheme had an opportunity to integrate itself unbiasedly into the library community. Hence, he published anonymously.

Also interesting is how Dewey divided non-fiction books into ten categories:

General works; Philosophy (logic...); Religion (mythology...); Social sciences (folklore, government, manners, customs...); Language (rhetoric, gammer...); Pure Science (mathematics, astronomy, geometry...); Technology (aviation, building, engineering...); Arts (painting, music, sports...); Literature (plays, poetry...); and History (ancient, modern, geography, travel...).

These categories metamorphically fit the ancient Kemetic concept of the seven liberal arts (gammer, rhetoric, logic, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music), the general Kemetic mystery system of the four elements (fire, water, earth, air), four qualities, duality

of opposites (hot-cold, wet-dry...), and its eight equal pole synthesis.

To illustrate this point further, we can use the Kemetic four elements (fire, water, earth, air) to outline the Dewey Decimal Classification and Library of Congress systems, and assign Dewey numbers and Library of Congress call letters to them. For the Dewey Decimal Classification system, we can assign the 500-599 pure sciences section, and in the Library of Congress classification the call letter "Q" for science can be used. For a specific element/quality for specific books we could use:

QC 254 R6 (*Heat and Thermodynamics* by John Keith Roberts) to represent heat; QP 82.2 T4 B86 (*Man in a Cold Environment* by Alan C. Burton and Otto G. Edholm) to represent cold; QH 541.5 S24 W47 (*Wet Coastal Ecosystems* edited by V.J. Chapman) to represent wet; QB 981 C5 (*The Origin of the Earth* by Thomas C. Chamberlin) to represent dry; and QD 121 O38 (*Traces Analysis of Atmospheric Samples* by Kikuo Oikawa) to represent the element of air.

Some might view this occurrence of Kemetic elements in the Dewey and Library of Congress classification systems as coincidental, or accidents of parallel human consciousness. But to the contrary, these are not cases of parallel consciousness. Kemetic knowledge preceded the above (Dewey and Library of Congress) classification systems by thousands of years. Hence, it would be virtually impossible in 1872 for Melvil Dewey to independently create a parallel scheme, without first researching ancient philosophical/classification schemes such as the Kemetic Mystery System.

It is especially doubtful when we know that (1) Dewey philosophically borrowed from Aristotle, who in turn borrowed many of his ideas from the Kemetic philosophy (Mystery System) taught at the temple-libraries of Kemet, which allowed him to later (after the invasion of Alexander) establish a Greek research center (library) in Alexandria from what he "...plundered and pillaged..." from the royal temples and libraries of Kemet (James, 1954, 1), and (2) both systems (Dewey and Library of Congress) begin their classifications with general works then move to philosophy and religion; a key classification phenomenon (theology/philosophy) of ancient Kemetic society.

The above unity of approaches to classifying knowledge (ancient and modern) is astonishing. Hence we can conclude with minimal (if any) reservation that the ancient Egyptians (Kemetics), a Black people, who as Malcolm X said were "...as much African as you and I," created the first library classification system from their philosophical/theological (Mystery System) knowledge, and thus, preceded the Dewey Decimal, Library of Congress, Universal Decimal, and the Ranganathan Colon systems by thousands of years.

Classification

The putting of like kinds of works in boxes together, medical works, etc., is found as early as 2700 B.C. in Egypt... (Richardson, 1963b, 149).

The classification scheme of Kemet was based on the Mystery System, and organized in a chest/jar arranged by placing a label/docked on the verso of papyrus rolls with small pieces of papyrus/parchment to describe its contents (Posner, 1972, 87). Hence they probably had little if any problem designing their classification system (they had an extensive educational system and were excellent record keepers).

Ernest Posner, in his book *Archives in the Ancient World* (p. 2), illustrates this point by saying: "Rarely ...has there been bureaucracy

as record-conscious as that of ancient Egypt," and that it "...also contributed toward making record-consciousness integral and important in the life of the people."

This concern with keeping records was thus institutionalized in the office of the vizier, the chief administrator and official of the government, who catalogued and inventoried "...every Egyptian," and all things in Egypt, and headed all the archives of the king in the House of the King and the courts, and directed four departments of the royal writings (Posner, 1972, 79, 81) i.e.:

(1) the House of the Royal Writings , i.e., the Chancery;

(2) the House of the Sealed Writings, i.e., the registration department;

(3) the House of Writings or Archives, archival service; and,

(4) the House of the Chief Taxation.

The most well known vizier from ancient Kemetic tomb inscriptions was Rekhmire (mentioned above), a judge and (the first) professional library administrator, who is depicted in a picture in the tomb of the temple-library of Amon with forty papyri rolls before him and a collection of books from the 15th century B.C. This same person represents Kemet as the cradle of civilization and the idea of "Written Records" in the dome of the Rotunda Reading Room in Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Herbert Small, in his book *The Library of Congress: Its Architecture and Decorations* (1982, 106-07), gives a description of Rekhmire in his representation of Kemet as one of the four primary influences of twelve nations or epochs which have contributed most to the development of America. He says Rekhmire:

...is clad in loincloth and a cap with flaps as he supports a hieroglyphic inscribed tablet in his left hand, an ankh (Tau or cross) in his right hand, a case of books at his feet --- filled with manuscript rolls of papyrus, and a second tablet behind his feet in the form of a winged ball.

The representation is an outstanding pictorial homage to the Kemetic contribution to human knowledge and wisdom in the "House of Archives" (Library of Congress).

Information Retrieval: An Exercise

In the second year of the reign of King Neferhotep (ca. 1788 B.C.), the sophistication of Kemetic libraries (and librarians) was demonstrated when the king asked to see the ancient writings of Atom in the temple of Heliopolis. His nobles, scribes of the hieroglyphics, masters of all secrets, and librarians, agreed. Therefore, he examined the books in the temple library with his librarians and cabinet of intellect, and thereafter decided to build a temple in honor of Osiris, based upon the information he discovered (Metzger, 1980, 36-37).

This action indicates a high level of library organization, and evidence of a system for organizing books and materials, that allowed them to be found quickly and easily by those who wanted to use the library (and a means to bring materials together easily and conveniently).[10] (Gates, 1983, 42) These are key criteria for any library classification system, a system the ancient Kemetics obviously possessed (and the Greeks used in their "book hall" wall catalog in the Horus temple at Edfu, which lists 37 titles and dates from the time of Ptolemaios VIII and Euergetes II (177-116 B.C.) (Wendel, 1949, 5; Blum, 1991, 212).

A Catalog

A library without a system of classification, organization, or cataloging does not work. It is like a person without a heart; to live one must have a heart. Hence, for a library to live, it must have a heart which is its system of classification, cataloging, and organization.

To this end, the ancient Kemetics had organization, a catalog, and a cataloging system. The system, like the previously mentioned classification scheme, was based on the Mystery System, which, in this case, gave cataloged library items/materials an arrangement via class (fire, water, earth, air), process (hot, cold, wet, dry), method (duality/union of opposites), and logic; the basic ingredients of any library catalog.

Evidence of a catalog and a system have been found (as mentioned above): (1) "incised on the walls at Edfu/Idfu (with) ...a full catalog of all the "heretical" works contained in that library," (Schullian, 1990, 310) (2) on "papyrus rolls ...placed in clay jars or metal cylinders ...labeled with a few key words describing their content, (3) and via parchment scrolls ...divided by author, ...title, or ...major subject or form groups, ...placed in bins or on shelves." (Gates, 1983, 41)

At Tel el-Amarna (1375-1350), the modern name for the site of the city of Akhetaton, a clay tablet was found that bears the inscription: *The Book of the Sycamore and the Olive. The Good God, Nibma'at-Re, given life, beloved of Ptah king of the two lands, and the King's Wife Teie, living* to identify/classify books belonging to the royal library of Amenhotep III and his wife Teie (the parents of Akhenaton). This is another indication of a catalog system, and the genesis of a catalog/classification system (Metzger, 1980, 211).

The Bookcase/Chest

The bookcase/chest, like the catalog, classification, and other aspects of librarianship, also seems to have its roots in Kemet. The bookcase/chest (or clay jar) was the most universal and natural method of keeping records in ancient times. According to Ernest C. Richardson, in his book *Biblical Libraries*, the rolls (books) "...must have been kept in chests or in small boxes, like the box containing the medical papyri of King Neferikere some 1,300 years before, or the many boxes at Edfu long after, or the wooden boxes in which some allege that the Amarna records were kept." (Richardson, 1914, 46; 1963b., 145, 171)

Richardson also gives us a visual picture of the bookcase/chest which seems to have provided Kemet with a method to store its papyri rolls and temple/monument documents and other materials. Hence the Kemetic bookcase/chest seems to be a predecessor to the modern bookcase, compact shelving, high-density storage, and other space saving units (*Ibid*, 77).

Miseducation by Design

Now that we have discussed: (1) the importance of Kemet; (2) race/color in ancient Kemet; (3) Kemetic history; (4) the roots of Kemetic literature and librarianship; (5) the first librarians and library motto; (6) Kemetic education, architecture; (7) Melvil Dewey and his classification scheme; and (8) cataloging, we can turn to the issue of miseducation, misinformation, and an affirmative Afro-centric corrective action paradigm.

The issue of miseducation is usually controversial. The subject of the library and its history is not exempt. Traditional library history as taught in American schools of library and information science/studies is generally Euro-centrically focused on the Western world, rather than the international world community. Hence "library history" is essentially a Euro-centric over glorification of the Alexandria Library, Aristotle, and Western

civilization. For example, when we read about library history, we usually receive the following ditties:

(1) *Aristotle is the first, of whom we know, who collected books, and it was he who taught the kings of Egypt the organization of a library* (White, 1978, 384);

(2) *Important libraries of the ancient world were those of Aristotle, the great library at Alexandria with its thousands of papyrus and vellum scrolls...* (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1985, Vol. 7, 333);

(3) *In a sense modern library history begins with Aristotle, Alexander, and Alexandria...* (Richardson, 1914, 148); and

(4) *The first libraries as such were those of Greek temples and those established in conjunction with the Greek schools of philosophy* (Encyclopedia Britannica, *Ibid*).

In reality, the opposite is true. The first libraries of culture were in the temples of ancient Kemet (Egypt), with an advanced library-university faculty who taught "philosophy" before the Greeks learned of its existence from the Egyptians; a reality George G.M. James informs us of in his book *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy* (1954, 47).

"The Greeks did not carry culture and learning to Egypt, but found it already there, and wisely settled in that country, in order to absorb as much as possible of its culture." In the same vain, Aristotle didn't teach the kings of Egypt (unless its a reference to the Greek Ptolemies), the Egyptians taught him. He was the student, not the teacher.

In fact, it was the previously mentioned Manetho, an ancient African Kemetic historian and high priest (credited with writing between three and six books on Kemetic philosophy and religious history) in the Temple of Isis at Sebennytus/Heliopolis, who taught the Greeks of Alexandria, and corrected errors in their documents made by Herodotus ("the father" of history) and Hecataeus of Abdera (Alagoa, 1989, 5-6).

Therefore, the idea of Aristotle teaching the Egyptians is a myth, along with the myth of his being the first to collect books and establish the "great" library of Alexandria. The real story is that he (or his agents) stole most of the collection, and copied or stole the remainder (700,000 volumes) from the Kemetic temple libraries, to build the "great" Alexandria Library. Hence his library of "...thousands of papyrus and vellum scrolls..." was actually stolen Kemetic property.

Moreover, Peck (1897) and Hessel (1955) inform us that: (1) "the large libraries of Assyrian and Egyptian monarchs were unknown to the Greeks til the time of the Ptolemies," (Peck, 1897, 208) and (2) "...libraries were still unknown to Greece in classical times." (Hessel, 1950, 2) Hence Greek knowledge of libraries and information science before their arrival in Kemet was nil. This attests to the fallacy (infused in misinformation) of Aristotle, the plunderer of ancient Kemetic books, as a teacher of Egyptian kings.[11]

Misinformation by Design

The *World Book Encyclopedia* (Vol. 12, 1989, 253), a major source for school libraries, has unfortunately added to the above misinformation by not telling the true story of the African contribution to library history. In its first few lines concerning Africa and its place in library history, it states "...millions of Africans have no public library service," with no contemporary or historical explanation as to why "...millions of Africans have no public library service," if that is the case.

Moreover, it fails to mention (1) the ancient documents or archives of ancient Kemet --- the home of the first library, (2) the 10,000 volume royal library of Kushite ancient writings found in 1655 (Tejani, 1988, 28), or (3) the work of Ahmed Baba, the last chancellor of the University of Sankore and author of more than 40 books who, in 1592, had a library of 1,600 books, one of the richest libraries of his day (Clarke, 1968, 633).

This omission does a grave injustice to African people specifically, and library history in general. Hence we can see how negative images are formed about Africa and African people, when major educational sources (*Encyclopedia Britannica/World Book Encyclopedia*, etc.) state the above without qualifying the reason(s) for "...no public library service" in Africa.

There is no discussion of imperialism, colonialism, racism, or any of the evils that hinder the progress of Africa. Consequently, the encyclopedia(s) fail to inform their readers that ancient Kemet ("the black land") is the home of the first: library of consequence, library motto, law librarian (via Rekhmire), university library, and a Mystery System based catalog and classification scheme developed 6,000 years ago.

Reasons for the above info-injustice (miseducation/ misinformation), and why ancient Kemet is not generally recognized for its early mastery of library and information science (and civilization) are many. However, we can explore some of the reasons, which seem to relate to eight hegemonic phenomena:

(1) a general attempt to colonize information by moving it from its place of origin. For example, the (Precepts of Path-hotep) Prisse Papyrus, the oldest Egyptian book written before the end of the third millennium circa (2880), was moved to the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris (Gates, 1983, 6; Nichols, 1964, 33-34), and other texts are in the Pergamum, the Bibliotheca Ulpia of Rome, and other enclaves of the Western world for public and private examination;

(2) after the invasion of Alexander, the royal temples and libraries were "plundered and pillaged" (James, 1954, 1), and "...knowledge of the culture of Africa has been lost because of the destruction of ancient records," (Jackson, 1970, 296);

(3) due to the destruction of the ancient library at (Wo-set/Wo-Se') Thebes (destroyed by an invading Assyrian army in 661 B.C.), and the destruction of the "...great libraries in several African cities [that] were burned and looted, and [thus had] their treasures... lost to posterity," (*Ibid*);

(4) a general over glorification of Eurocentric librarianship;

(5) a general negation of the contributions people outside the Western world (e.g. China has a library history dating from the 6th century B.C. and a national collection beginning in 220 B.C.);

(6) the Greek (and the Arab) habit of altering place and personal names to fit their agenda. For example, the Kemetic name for what the Greeks called hieroglyphs or hieroglyphics is Neter Kharu (meaning divine words), according to Peck (1897, 814), and Mdw Ntr according to Hilliard (1985, 157);

(7) a false consciousness (usually steeped in white racism, or its highest order: white world supremacy) that will not allow one to see Egypt (Kemet) as a Black civilization and a world leader (as stated previously); and last but not least, and perhaps the most devastating;

(8) the phenomena that attempts to control thought, a phenomena our elder statesman-historian Dr. John Henrik Clarke says began

"in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, during the rise of the Atlantic slave trade, [when] the Europeans not only began to colonize the minds of people of the world, [but] ...also colonized information about the world," (Clarke, 1991, 343).

Consequently, our mission is to develop a corrective agenda, or paradigm, to address the above issues. Therefore, outlined below is an Afro-centric corrective paradigm in various stages of national and international implementation, based on the premise that the library is a key institution of society, organized to facilitate human knowledge and understanding. Thus, all should know its Kemetic origin, be rejuvenated by it, and utilize their knowledge to combat library (his story) history hegemonism and exclusionism.

The metamorphosis of the latter will obviously take time. However, we can begin with a paradigm that asks its adherents to:

(1) challenge (and ultimately change) the Euro-centic focus of library and information science education;

(2) incorporate the above facts, generalizations, concepts, and theories into current discourse on or about African world community history and thought;

(3) build and assist Afro-centric school formations;

(4) critically re-think what they are taught about library history (if anything), pre- and post- library school;

(5) empower themselves, and their community with knowledge;

(6) discuss the ancient Kemetic origins of library and information science with others, whenever they visit a library, or are near a library (an act of empowering the community); and,

(7) establish a network of Afro-centric libraries and library enthusiasts to address the needs of the African world community, hence an independent, new African world information order.

The library is an institution many believe originated in the Western world with the Greeks, who, contrary to popular belief, learned what they knew about libraries from ancient Kemet, and later claimed to the world as their creation. Therefore, it is time for the African (especially), and all people who seek the truth, to become aware of (and an advocate of) the glorious library history and tradition of ancient Kemet (Egypt). A long proud and productive history and tradition that will not allow one to sit on the outside of library history, looking in, from across the street, as if he/she were a stranger to an institution our African ancestors invented and refined for the world to enjoy.

It is time for a new reconstruction of library history. It is time for a history that will unhesitantly put Africa, and the African experience, at the center of its discussion. Otherwise, we risk the evil of participating in our own oppression, while our adversaries laugh at our imitative ignorance, and assign us to the bottom rungs of society.

Notes:

[1] The Main Reading Room of the U.S. Library of Congress acknowledges the Egyptian (Kemetic) contribution to knowledge via the Egyptian in its ceiling architecture, who holds an ankh (a Kemetic symbol of life and reincarnation), a hieroglyphically inscribed tablet with the seal of King Menes (Aha Mena/Narmer), and a case of books at his feet, filled with rolls of papyrus manuscripts (Small, 1982, 106-07).

[2] The words Kemet and Egypt are used interchangeably throughout this article to

awaken our consciousness to the importance of using the word Kemet for the land we now call Egypt.

3. Hilliard (1984, 154) tells us that although Kemet was somewhat a mixed society, it was the Africans who founded the early kingdoms and built the pyramids and temples during its golden age.

4. Based upon all scientific evidence, Africa appears to be the ultimate source of all modern human mitochondrial DNA, an essential component of all living matter and a basic material that houses the genetic code and transmitter of heredity patterns (Williams, 1991, 58).

5. All humans are very recent descendants of African people. The various races today only reflect superficial physical differences (Williams, 1991, 54).

6. William C. Hayes, in his **National Geographic** article (1941, 425), states that the ancient Egyptians, like their neighbors, the Libyans, Bedjas, Somali, and the Galla "...are and always have been Africans," and similarly Bernal says "Egyptian civilization is clearly based on the rich Pre-dynastic cultures of Upper Egypt and Nubia, whose African origin is uncontested." (Bernal, 1987, 15)

7. Evidence of this writing is inscribed on the palette of King Narmer, commemorating his military victory over Upper Kemet, before the rule of King Memes (McWhirter, 1982, 166).

8. Although many of the libraries of Kemet were for the elite, by 2000 B.C. literacy was not limited to the elite (Metzger, 1980, 210).

9. Dewey also studied Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), an English philosopher who emphasized using inductive reasoning to obtain knowledge, and John Locke (1632-1704) who believed that all ideas come from experience and aren't innate, and other philosophers (Wetterau, 1990, 214, 216).

10. We can only guess what might happen to a librarian who couldn't find the request of the king, or did not know how to find a source. Hence the librarian must have had a classification system, a good memory, or both, to locate a book, etc. upon demand.

11. In fact Europe didn't know anything about libraries until the African Moors of North Africa occupied and introduced them in Spain (James, 1954, 39).

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